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ABSTRACT

This study assesses aging stereotypes to provide a foundation for the development of gerontology curricula and an inter-disciplinary program in gerontology at Los Angeles City College. A sample of 147 students (60 males and 87 females, 71 aged 18-29, 39 aged 30-59, and 37 aged 60-84), enrolled in five anthropology courses and three sections of a Second Start program, filled out the Aging Semantic Differential and a demographic questionnaire designed to ascertain whether males viewed aging differently from females, whether the young were more negative about the elderly than older people themselves, and whether aging in females was viewed more negatively by either sex than aging in males. Data were submitted to a computer for an analysis of variance for six sub-groups: young, middle-aged, and older females, and young, middle-aged, and older males. There were no significant differences in the mean scores of sub-groups, although several interesting tendencies were revealed. Young and middle-aged males viewed aging in males more negatively than aging in females. Females tended to view aging more positively than males. Older males had the most negative views towards aging of any other sub-group. (Author/TE)

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THE EFFECTS OF SEX AND AGE ON STEREOTYPES OF AGING

by

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Los Angeles City College

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
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H. Q.
Los Angeles
June 1978

ABSTRACT

This study was done to assess stereotypes about aging. Its purpose was to provide a foundation for the development of gerontology curricula, and in time an inter-disciplinary gerontology program at Los Angeles City College.

The major questions asked were whether males view aging differently from females, whether the young are more negative about the elderly than older people themselves, and whether aging in females is viewed more negatively by either sex than aging in males.

With the main variables being sex and age, the subjects consisted of both sex divided into three age-groups, Young Adult, Middle-Aged and Older Adult. The age-range was from 18 through 84. All of the 147 respondents were either students, or members of a Second Start program at Los Angeles City College.

Data was submitted to the computer for an analysis of variance of the six sub-groups. Although the statistical treatment indicated no significant differences in the mean scores of the sub-groups, several interesting tendencies were revealed. Young and Middle-Aged male subjects view aging in males more negatively than aging in females. Female subjects tended to view aging with more positive attitudes than male subjects. Older males had the most negative views toward aging of the six sub-groups.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A) Purpose of this study

This paper reports on the measurement of stereotypes about aging on a college campus. The purpose in taking measurements is to apply this knowledge toward the creation of gerontology curricula. This is a preliminary step in the development of an inter-disciplinary gerontology program at Los Angeles City College. At a later time, perhaps in a future Nova module, student attitudes measured in this research will be compared with faculty attitudes.

Stereotypes about aging are sometimes referred to as "agism." An awareness that agism exists is as fundamental to the development of gerontology curricula as awareness of racism was to the creation of ethnic and racial studies and sexism to the creation of women's studies. What agism, racism and sexism have in common is that a sizable segment of the population is perceived in uniformly negative ways that profoundly affect their lives. The task of education in part is to counteract negative stereotypes and to replace fallacies with accurate information. To do this we must first understand the nature and extent of the attitudes that are held.

Negative attitudes about aging and the elderly are commonplace in American culture. Such stereotypes can exert a harmful influence on a group's life chances. Perceiving

senior adults as sickly and feeble may even encourage the notion that the entire age-group may be expendable if national resources diminish. Consider the provocative title of a newspaper editorial:

How Much Is It Worth to Keep the Old Alive?

The article's entire focus was on the needs of older persons for the type of medical technology that prolongs life for the terminally ill, such as dialysis, coronary bypass and renal transplants (Lachs 1976). Perceiving older people as uniformly decrepit and helpless (i.e., moribund), and balancing this perception with predictions about the rising costs of life-prolonging machines, the author is prompted to a "pragmatic" dollars-and-cents evaluation of the upward-spiralling costs of maintaining the elderly as their numbers increase:

> It is not inconceivable that a substantial portion of the national wealth could be spent on prolonging the life of the older people in our midst. Is this what we want to do? (Lachs 1976:4)

B) Demography of senior adults

Stereotypes suggest that relatively little is understood about the population 65 and older. Their presence in sizable numbers is a new phenomenon in human history. In 1870 only 1.2 million Americans were in that age category, a mere 3 percent of the total. As birthrates declined, older people became the fastest growing segment of all. In the space of one century--by 1977--people 65 and over numbered almost 23 million, a staggering 11 percent of the total

population, or better than one person in every ten (Weg 1977:3). Demographers predict even more rapid growth of this age-group in the future.

Any group numbering almost 23 million must by definition be highly differentiated, a circumstance the stereotypes ignore. Most are not even "old" by today's standards of mobility and health. The Census reports that as of 1973 a full 62 percent were still under the age of 73, the majority capable of being active and involved (Weg 1977:2).

There is an increasing trend for seniors to go to college, and some schools are creating special programs (Maeroff 1978:1). Despite this, hardly any educators are aware of this age group as potential clients for education. Some are downright hostile, as one professor at the University of Arizona told his 50-year old student:

> I was hoping you would drop out. I don't want older students in my class (Ahern 1978:11).

Dr. Robert Butler, Director of the National Institute on Aging, describes the stereotyped perceptions of some educators:

> An older person thinks and moves slowly...can no longer change or grow. He can learn neither well nor swiftly, and even if he could, he would not wish to (Butler 1975:7).

From the viewpoint of an educator, no stereotype could be more insidious. It assumes that older people cannot profit from education as much as any other age-group, and more insulting yet, suggests that older people are not interested in opportunities for intellectual and cultural

growth. It ignores the growing numbers of older people now pursuing their educations on college campuses and competing successfully with younger ones. Finally it assumes that 23 million human beings have the same mind and the same motive.

C) The research

For education to avoid reinforcing the rest of society's mythology about aging and to serve its clients with proper information, a mandatory first step was to fully recognize the type and extent of negativism that exists in students' minds. Since evidence suggests that virtually everybody fears aging and views older people as lacking in worth, this research set out to discover if attitudinal differences existed in distinct groups, such as males and females, young and old.

An instrument that measures attitudes was found, called "The Aging Semantic Differential." This made it possible to elicit emotionally-charged data in an objective manner and submit it to statistical treatment. The campus population yielded subjects of both sexes in a wide range of ages, from late teens to early eighties. It thus became feasible to inquire whether age and sex were variables that affect stereotypes about aging. The research questions and their background in the literature are detailed in the next chapter.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

A) Research questions

This research asks the following questions:

1) What is the magnitude of the differences in stereotyping among subjects of three different age-groups as measured on "The Aging Semantic Differential?"

2) What is the magnitude of the differences in stereotyping between the two sexes as measured on "The Aging Semantic Differential?"

3) Are there measurable differences in stereotyping depending on whether the subject has in mind an Old Man or an Old Woman, as measured on "The Aging Semantic Differential?"

The measuring instrument was used to reveal whether the young have a worse opinion of the elderly than the elderly themselves; or if males have a worse opinion of the elderly than females do, and whether stereotyping of older women is more pernicious than that for older men.

B) Review of the literature

1) Negative stereotypes of aging

A copious literature supports the contention that stereotyped attitudes about older people are pervasive and exert a baleful influence on their lives. McTavish (1971) describes the more commonplace:

> Stereotyped views of the elderly uncovered in various studies include views that old people are generally ill, tired, not sexually interested, mentally slower, forgetful and less able to learn new things, grouchy, withdrawn, feeling sorry for themselves, less likely to participate in activities (except religion), isolated, in the least happy time of life, unfortunate and unproductive, and defensive in various combinations...

Collette-Pratt (1976) found that all age groups devalued old age. Spence and others (1968) unfortunately found that even medical students specializing in geriatrics manifested attitudes as marked by negativism and antipathy toward the aged after four years of training as when they began their studies. More recently, whole books are devoted to correcting the stereotypes held about the aged, such as that of Butler and Lewis (1973) and Comfort (1976).

Negative stereotypes and discrimination seem to go hand-in-hand, determining not only how, but where one may live. In his study of a governmental attempt to provide low-cost housing for the elderly poor in an affluent community, Butler (1969) describes that community's reaction as a "middle-aged riot:"

> ...screeching, shouting, booing and stomping...their hostility against advanced age far outweighed their objections based on color and social class, even though the latter were not lacking.

Among the stereotypes applied to the elderly poor of Butler's study were some familiar ones--they create slums wherever they live (i.e., are filthy and incompetent to care for themselves), and they should have provided better for themselves (i.e., being poor is their own fault).

Another stereotype which holds that the elderly are all unfit as workers is the cause of much poverty. A major problem of the elderly, low income, results for too many from a combination of compulsory retirement and/or inability to find work. Once having crossed the Rubicon of 65, one is unlikely

to be judged on individual merits of talent and experience in the job market, even if body and mind are sound. Ability to work makes a crucial difference in income regardless of age.

> In 1973 only 16 percent of those over 65, mostly men, were in the labor force. Loss of work is the single most important source of reduction in income. At retirement one can expect income to decrease by half. Unhappily, older workers have a hard time getting work of any kind once they retire or are laid off, even if they are still healthy and able to work (Leinwand 1975:35).

Neugarten (1975:114) suggests that stereotypes about the aged are difficult to dispel largely because research on aging in both the biological and social sciences is such a recent development, and findings reach the public at a snail's pace. Even these findings describe only a small minority:

> Many widely held but inaccurate images, inadvertently repeated through the mass media, come from social workers who serve the poor, the lonely, and the isolated, and from physicians and psychiatrists who see the physically ill and the mentally ill. Thus we base many of our current stereotypes on a picture of the needy rather than on a picture of the typical older person.

And even agencies of the federal government show rampant bias against the elderly (Mitchell 1978):

> Citizens 65 and over, those most often in need of government-supplied health and social services, are victims of widespread age discrimination by the federal government, the Civil Rights Commission reported... the older an individual, the more likely he or she will be denied access to needed services and benefits because of age alone.

2) Sex differences

Negative stereotypes about the aged seem to vary in severity depending on the sex of the older person stereotyped. Sontag (1975) posits a "double standard of aging" that

denounces aging in women with special force. She notes that society is much more permissive of aging in men, considering women "over-the-hill," i.e., socially and vocationally obsolete, decades sooner. Harris (1975) sees the "double standard of aging" as working to the serious disadvantage of older women, especially the unmarried. She talks of the "disposable woman," no longer needed by the family she once served, as she reaches middle age.

Preston (1975) in describing stereotyped phrases about middle-aged and older people, concludes there is nothing for the aging male nearly so disparaging as the "old bag" epithet applied to aging females. According to Davis (1975) television perpetuates myths of aging and old age by stereotyping of the sexes. Hacker (1972) sees women as a minority group with a separate subculture and its own values relative to aging, usually despair at its onset. And Kethley (1973) eloquently titles an article: "Women and Aging: the Unforgivable Sin."

For these reasons it seemed appropriate to test respondents' attitudes separately about Old Man and Old Woman, and further, to ask if the sex of respondent related in any way to this possible distinction.

3) Age differences

Is there a generation-gap in stereotypes about old people? Bengtson (1973) notes that different age-cohorts have distinct value systems. Even three generations of males within the same family will have different values. Neugarten,

Moore and Lowe (1973) in a study of "age-norms" or age-appropriate behavior found that older subjects perceive greater constraints than younger ones on older people's behavior. Rose (1973) argues for a separate subculture of the aging, although Rosow (1974) disagrees.

The literature is not consistent as to whether the elderly have a worse opinion of old people than the young have. In any case the evidence that stereotypes about aging may vary with age of respondent was intriguing enough to become a hypothesis of this study.

C) The instrument of measurement

1) The Aging Semantic Differential

It was necessary to find an instrument capable of measuring respondents' attitudes toward aging which could be scored and treated statistically. A search into dissertations in educational gerontology yielded such an instrument. Early instruments developed to measure stereotyped attitudes toward aging, such as that of Tuckman and Lorge (1954), measured attitudes along a single dimension. Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) provided further depth by asking questions to measure several dimensions of attitude and determining the content of each dimension. They called their version "The Semantic Differential." Rosencranz and McNevin (1969) combined both ideas--they measured attitudes toward aging, along several dimensions--and evolved a scale called "The Aging Semantic Differential" which they used to test young male college students for their attitudes on men of different ages.

Rosencranz and McNevin's adaptation is the instrument used in the present study. In its present form it has been validated since 1969. Two doctoral dissertations written at the University of Oregon (Kethley 1974, Collette 1974) employed "The Aging Semantic Differential." Kethley tested two age groups for stereotypes of aging, and Collette tested three age groups. Both authors had subjects of both sexes but sex of the respondent was not correlated with attitudes, and neither was sex of the Social Object. The present study includes these variables--sex of respondent as well as sex of Social Object (separate responses for Old Man, Old Woman).

The attitude scale consists of 32 pairs of adjectives describing character attributes or personality traits (please see Appendix). Each pair is a set of polar opposites (i.e., busy-idle) with a seven-point scale between them permitting the respondent to express degrees of attitude from very positive to very negative, as well as neutrality. The pairs are arranged with negative traits in a column to the left, and positive traits to the right.

Because this is a pilot study it was decided to reduce the statistical complexity by scoring each questionnaire as a single unit, instead of subdividing each into the three separate dimensions of attitude. Scores along the three dimensions will be readily available in the future by simply adding a control card of instructions to the punch cards, and re-submitting the deck to the computer. For this study it was deemed sufficient to give each respondent two copies of

"The Aging Semantic Differential," one for Old Man, one for Old Woman. There was no indication in the search of the literature that this had ever been done before.

2) The demographic questionnaire

A questionnaire adapted with modifications from Kethley (1974) and Collette (1974) elicited personal information about the respondent, yielding other independent variables to correlate with attitudes on aging at some future time. The data consists of sex and age, marital status, educational level, income, and frequency of contact with parents and grandparents. The age of one's friends was also asked for.

D) Definitions

Some of the more commonly used terms of this paper have the following meanings:

1) Age-range

Senior Adult refers to persons age 60 or more. Unfortunately this also reflects a common stereotype in American culture, that all people are equally "aged" by those years. It is used here simply for convenience. Middle-Aged Adult includes those in the 30 to 59 age-bracket, and Young Adult describes persons 18 to 29.

2) Stereotype

This means a view of a variable group of people which assigns them uniform characteristics--the popular mythology involving pre-judgments. Stereotypes contain at least a grain of truth which gives them some credibility to those outside the group. This appearance of "truth" is typically erroneous

in describing the group as a whole and usually unflattering.

3) Attitude

Attitude indicates opinion or belief about others, usually without reflection, consisting of unconscious material that is complex and often self-serving.

III. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

A) Selection of subjects

Since age and sex were the independent variables, subjects fell into six sub-categories consisting of the two sexes divided into three age-groups. To have at least 15 subjects per category, considered the barest minimum by statisticians, no fewer than 90 subjects were needed. An ideal would be 120 subjects evenly divided by sex and age:

Respondents by Sex and Age, N=120

IDEAL

Age-range	M	F	Total
Young 18 to 25	20	20	40
Middle 40 to 55	20	20	40
Older 70 plus	20	20	40
Total	60	60	120

It was desirable that subjects be comparable in educational level and socio-economic status, and this was attempted by selecting people attending Los Angeles City College in the Spring 1978 semester. To acquire a wide span of ages, two types of subjects were chosen: 1) students enrolled for college credit in the writer's five anthropology courses; 2) three sections of a Second Start program consisting of senior adults age 60 or older. The real population sample was far from ideal:

Respondents by Sex and Age, N=147

Age-range	M	F	Total
Young 18 to 29	27	44	71
Middle 30 to 59	15	24	39
Older 60 to 84	18	19	37
Total	60	87	147

REAL

The sample was inadequate in a number of ways which will be analyzed in the Discussion section, Chapter V.

B) Method of collecting the data

Data was gathered during February 1978. The Aging Semantic Differential and the demographic questionnaire were administered to students in five anthropology classes at Los Angeles City College during a two-day period. A meeting was arranged with three sections of a Second Start program and the instruments were administered to them also. The two groups yielded a total of 147 responses.

C) Statistics used in the research

Three relationships among the variables were studied:

1) That between sex and attitude scores;

2) That among age groups and attitude scores;

3) The two-way interaction of age and sex on attitude scores.

The SPSS system was used to analyze the data and transfer it to punch cards. The computer performed an analysis of variance and reduced each respondent's raw score into the group's (and sub-groups') sum of squares, mean, standard deviation and variance.

D) The Null Hypotheses

Hereinafter, Alpha represents attitude scores for the instrument labeled Old Man, and Beta for Old Woman.

1) Sex as a variable

1a) There are no significant differences between male and female subjects in attitude scores for Alpha;

1b) There are no significant differences between male and female subjects in attitude scores for Beta.

2) Age as a variable

2a) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Alpha;

2b) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Beta.

3) Interaction of Sex and Age

Male subjects

3a) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Alpha;

3b) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Beta.

Female Subjects

3c) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Alpha;

3d) There are no significant differences among Young, Middle-Aged and Older subjects in attitude scores for Beta.

Both Sexes

3e) There are no significant differences between Young males and females on Alpha (on Beta);

3f) There are no significant differences between Middle-Aged males and females on Alpha (on Beta);

3g) There are no significant differences between Older males and females on Alpha (on Beta).

IV. THE FINDINGS

Each respondent was provided with two scoring sheets; one for Old Man (Alpha), and one for Old Woman (Beta). In scoring the instruments along a range of one to seven (per line) with all positive traits to the left of the page and all negative traits to the right, the lower the mean score, the more positive the attitude toward aging and the elderly; the higher the mean score, the greater the negativism or degree of agist stereotypes.

Findings are reported by sex, by age, and by combined sex and age groups. A table showing Analysis of Variance (hereinafter ANOVA) of the sub-groups follows each breakdown for sex and age.

A) By sex of subject

Table 1 Alpha by Sex, all subjects

	Mean	Std Dev	Variance
Male (N=58)	4.03	1.18	1.40
Female (N=85)	3.91	1.37	1.88
Total (N=143)	3.96	1.29	1.68

Table 2 ANOVA Table, Alpha by Sex

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square
Between Groups	0.50	(1)	0.50
Within Groups	238.47	(141)	1.69
Total	238.97	(142)	

F=0.299 T=0.547

Table 3 Beta by Sex, all subjects

	Mean	Std Dev	Variance
Male (N=52)	3.96	1.12	1.26
Female (N=84)	3.62	1.38	1.91
Total (N=136)	3.75	1.29	1.68

Table 4 ANOVA Table, Beta by Sex

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square
Between Groups	3.59	(1)	3.59
Within Groups	223.85	(134)	1.67
Total	227.44	(135)	

F=2.14 T=1.46

The F-ratio represents the Between Groups' mean square divided by the Within Groups' mean square. This is done to make certain that the different mean scores for the subgroups are not contaminated by varying fluctuations from the norm within each group.

The T-test in this study appears when total subjects are divided into two groups, Male and Female, and results compared by sex. For both the F-ratio and the T-test, the level of significance was for a 2-tailed test at p=.05 with degrees of freedom at infinity.

For both F-ratio and T-test, if the computed value is larger than the value reported in the statistical table (for F or for T), the null hypothesis that the means are equal can be rejected; if smaller, it cannot be rejected.

For Table 2 there are no statistically significant differences in attitude scores on Alpha. The computed F is 0.299, whereas the F table shows 2.99. The computed T is 0.547, whereas the T table shows 1.96.

For Table 4 the same is true, no significant differences, although the values are closer to being significant for Beta than for Alpha. The computed F is 2.149 and the F table shows 2.99. The computed T is 1.46, the T table shows 1.96.

B) By age of subject

Code
Y refers to Young Adults, age 18 to 29
M refers to Middle-Aged Adults, 30 to 59
O refers to Older Adults, age 60 to 84

Table 5 Alpha by Age, all subjects

Age	Mean	Std Dev	Variance
Y (N=70)	3.92	1.01	1.02
M (N=38)	3.83	1.15	1.32
O (N=36)	4.16	1.83	3.35
Total (N=144)	3.96	1.29	1.67

Table 6 ANOVA Table, Alpha by Age

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square
Between Groups	2.29	(2)	1.14
Within Groups	237.06	(141)	1.68
Total	239.35	(143)	

F=0.68 ETA sqrd=0.01

Table 7 Beta by Age, all subjects

Age	Mean	Std Dev	Variance
Y (N=70)	3.66	1.09	1.18
M (N=35)	3.63	1.15	1.33
O (N=32)	4.07	1.76	3.09
Total (N-137)	3.75	1.29	1.67

Table 8 ANOVA Table, Beta by Age

	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square
Between Groups	4.38	(2)	2.19
Within Groups	223.40	(134)	1.66
Total	227.78	(136)	

F=1.31 ETA sqrd=0.02

For Table 6, the F-value as well as ETA squared are too small to assume significant differences for scores on Alpha by age-groups, and the same is true of Table 8 on scores for Beta.

C) By age and sex combined

Table 9 shows the distribution of scores on Alpha broken down by sex and into the three age groups. We have also included the Sum of Squares, under the heading "Sum." Table 10 gives the same information for Beta. This permits a comparison of the six sub-groups. Please note that Sums of female subjects are consistently larger than for male subjects, due to the much larger proportion of female respondents in the study, rather than because of more negative attitude scores.

Table 9 Alpha by Sex and Age

N=143

	MALE					FEMALE				
Age	N	Sum	Mean	SD	Var	N	Sum	Mean	SD	Var
Y	27	110.48	4.09	0.69	0.47	43	164.20	3.81	1.16	1.35
M	15	55.66	3.71	1.18	1.40	23	89.92	3.91	1.14	1.31
O	16	68.00	4.25	1.74	3.04	19	78.71	4.14	1.98	3.94
Tot	58	234.14	4.03	1.18	1.40	85	332.84	3.91	1.37	1.88

Table 10 Beta by Sex and Age

N=136

	MALE					FEMALE				
Age	N	Sum	Mean	SD	Var	N	Sum	Mean	SD	Var
Y	27	103.65	3.83	0.63	0.40	43	152.71	3.55	1.29	1.66
M	13	44.68	3.43	1.08	1.17	22	82.47	3.74	1.20	1.45
O	12	57.68	4.80	1.58	2.49	19	69.53	3.65	1.79	3.22
Tot	52	206.01	3.96	1.12	1.26	84	304.71	3.62	1.38	1.91

In Table 9 for Alpha (Old Man), older men respondents have the most negative attitude scores. Middle-aged male respondents by contrast have the most positive mean scores for Alpha, of all respondents. Middle women are most negative among female respondents about aging in males. Younger women have the most positive mean scores for Alpha among female respondents.

In general terms, females tend to have more positive attitude scores than males, and the Older age-group tends to have more negative mean scores than the two younger groups.

In Table 10 for Beta (Old Woman), younger and older female respondents were most positive among females, whereas younger and older male respondents were most negative among males. Middle-aged male subjects had more positive scores than middle-aged female subjects, although there were a scant 13 responses among the males, possibly calling the findings into question.

In general terms, males tend to see aging in females (Beta) more negatively than female respondents. Here again as with Alpha (Table 9), older males have the most negative attitudes of any other sub-group. Middle-aged males and young females have the most positive scores for Beta.

D) By sex of Social Object

The last comparison to be made is that between scores on Alpha (Old Man) and Beta (Old Woman). Table 11 shows a breakdown by age and sex of all subjects.

Table 11 Alpha Compared With Beta

Subjects		ALPHA Sum	ALPHA Mean	BETA Sum	BETA Mean	
MALE	Y (27)	110.47	4.09	103.65	3.83	Y (27)
	M (15)	55.66	3.71	44.67	3.43	M (13)
	O (16)	68.01	4.25	57.68	4.80	O (12)
	Tot (58)	234.14	4.03	206.01	3.96	Tot (52)
FEMALE	Y (43)	164.20	3.82	152.71	3.55	Y (43)
	M (23)	89.92	3.91	82.47	3.75	M (22)
	O (19)	78.71	4.14	69.52	3.66	O (19)
	Tot (85)	332.84	3.91	304.71	3.62	Tot (84)
TOTAL	(143)	566.98	3.96	510.73	3.75	(136)

When Alpha and Beta are compared for all six sub-groups as in Table 11, some interesting tendencies are revealed. Younger and Middle-Aged male respondents are more negative towards Old Man than Old Woman, but Older male respondents are more negative toward Old Woman.

Female respondents of all age-groups are more negative toward Old Man, compared with their responses to Old Woman.

Middle-aged males and Younger females were most positive in scores for both Old Man and Old Woman of any other sub-group.

In general terms, Older respondents of both sexes had the most negative attitudes, and male respondents generally scored more negatively than female respondents. The most consistently positive responses were scored by Middle-Aged males and Young females. Except for Older male respondents, there was more negativism expressed about Old Man than about Old Woman.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the fact that the null hypotheses could not be rejected, the research was not without its strengths--an outstanding measuring instrument, access to a computer to deal with the raw data, and the help of a statistician. The research problem moreover contained high interest, even drama, and captured the imagination of the subjects by its relevance to today's world.

The most serious weaknesses of the study probably were those of sample selection. These were such as to impose serious limitations upon the study.

1) Sex-ratio

The imbalance of respondents by sex presented a major problem. Because a large number of young students were available, it was easy to find enough Young Adults of both sexes even though females greatly outnumber males. The Second Start program fortunately provided Older subjects of both sexes. It was virtually impossible however to find Middle-Aged men on campus (outside of the faculty). To get at least 15 in this category it became necessary to include males in their early 30's, who are not middle-aged by any standards.

2) Age-range

Ideally there should have been three discrete (i.e., non-overlapping) age groups to represent three generational cohorts, with a large age-gap between any two contiguous

groups, as shown on Page 13. Instead, the subjects had a virtually unbroken continuum of ages from 18 through 84, with gaps only appearing in the late 70's. This situation forced an artificial division into Young, Middle-Aged and Old, and people who were one year apart in chronological years would be put in separate age categories (like 59 and 60). It makes no sense to assume, where age is a major variable, that a 29-year old man (Young Adult) will have measurably different attitudes about aging than a 30-year old man (Middle-Aged Adult).

The absence of gaps between age-groups resulted in too wide an age-range within the two older groups. Obviously a 30-year old is younger enough than a 59-year old to be a son or daughter to the latter, yet they were both incorporated into the category Middle-Aged. As for the Older Adults, there are worlds of difference between a person of 60, and the same person 20 years later in their eighties.

3) Randomness

There was no opportunity within the confines of this research to control factors that were extraneous to the age-sex variables, such as socio-economic status. At Los Angeles City College, famous for its multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan student-body, respondents range from provincial to urbane, from barely literate to brilliant in scholarship. There was also no way to standardize for socio-economic status between students and Second Start members, since the latter have a sizable representation of recently arrived Philippinos.

These and probably other Second Start members are not familiar with college procedures, with testing situations, and with filling out forms, in sharp contrast to students. Despite careful and lengthy explanations, many appeared not to understand what was required of them when the questionnaires were handed out. Probably many lacked reading skills in English.

To further complicate the unscientifically selected hodgepodge, in the last two years a sizable number of students of East Asian origin have enrolled in this college. People from these cultures tend to have unusually high respect for the elderly, compared with American-born middle-class youth. This possibly also contaminated the attitude scores.

4) Time

One of the most troubling problems was that there were fewer answers for Beta than for Alpha. Respondents were given questionnaires in which the Alpha page came first, followed by the Beta page. If one were pressed for time, Beta responses would suffer. The situation was easily managed with the writer's own student-classes, but only a limited amount of time was permitted when meeting with the Second Start group. With time at a premium and with some confusion about the situation, many Older respondents appeared to be rushed and handed in incomplete questionnaires.

5) Recommendations

With such glaring problems in sample selection, it is not difficult to know what to avoid to improve the research.

First would be to make certain that subjects form discrete, non-overlapping, distinctly different generational cohorts. Generation-gaps are what this research is about.

Second in importance would be a more balanced sex ratio so that there are approximately equal numbers of the two sexes in each age-group.

Thirdly, it is mandatory to have a more homogeneous ethnic, racial, and social-class selection, so that people who broadly share philosophies can be tested to see if age and sex make a difference.

Fourth, not least, is the matter of time to answer the questions, especially if there are wide divergences in the population regarding reading skills.

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The following information is completely confidential and anonymous. It will be used for statistical purposes only. Do not give your name.

1. SEX 1. Male____ 2. Female____

2. BIRTHDATE Month_____ Year_____

3. MARITAL STATUS 1. Single____ 2. Married____ 3. Widowed____
4. Divorced____ 5. Separated____

4. EDUCATION
1. Some elementary school____
2. Completed elementary school____
3. Some high school____
4. Completed high school____
5. Some college____
6. Completed college, bachelor's degree____
7. Completed college, graduate degree____

5. EMPLOYMENT
1. Working full-time____ Occupation_____
2. Working part-time____ Occupation_____
3. Unemployed____ Former Occupation_____
4. Retired____ Former Occupation_____

6. FAMILY INCOME
1. Under $2000 per year____
2. $2000 to $5000 per year____
3. $5000 to $10,000 per year____
4. $10,000 to $20,000 per year____
5. $20,000 to $40,000 per year____
6. Over $40,000 per year____

7. IF NOW RETIRED, WHAT WAS YOUR FORMER FAMILY INCOME
1. Under $5000 per year____
2. $5000 to $10,000 per year____
3. $10,000 to $20,000 per year____
4. $20,000 to $40,000 per year____
5. Over $40,000 per year____

8. IF PARENTS ALIVE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE ONE OR BOTH
1. Once or more each week____
2. 1 to 3 times a month____
3. Once every six months____
4. Once a year____
5. Less frequently than once a year____

9. IF GRANDPARENTS ALIVE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE ONE OR MORE
1. Once or more each week____
2. 1 to 3 times a month____
3. Once every six months____
4. Once a year____
5. Less frequently than once a year____

10. IN WHICH AGE-GROUP ARE MOST OF YOUR FRIENDS
1. Under 25____
2. 25 to 30____
3. 30 to 44____
4. 45 to 64____
5. 65 to 84____
6. 85 and over____

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 11 1978

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

Below is a list of opposite adjectives accompanied by a scale. Please place a check mark along the scale at a point which in your judgment best describes the type of person indicated. Your first impression is what is wanted.

Type of Person: 85-Year Old MAN

Progressive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Old-Fashioned
Consistent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Inconsistent
Independent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dependent
Rich	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Poor
Generous	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Selfish
Productive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unproductive
Busy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Idle
Secure	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Insecure
Strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Weak
Healthy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unhealthy
Active	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Passive
Handsome	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Ugly
Cooperative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncooperative
Optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Pessimistic
Satisfied	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dissatisfied
Expectant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Resigned
Flexible	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Inflexible
Hopeful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dejected
Organized	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Disorganized
Happy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Sad
Friendly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unfriendly
Neat	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Untidy
Trustful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Suspicious
Self-Reliant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dependent
Liberal	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Conservative
Certain	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncertain
Tolerant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Intolerant
Pleasant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unpleasant
Ordinary	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Eccentric
Aggressive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Defensive
Exciting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dull
Decisive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Indecisive

Below is a list of opposite adjectives accompanied by a scale. Please place a check mark along the scale at a point which in your judgment best describes the type of person indicated. Your first impression is what is wanted.

Type of Person: 85-Year Old WOMAN

Progressive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Old-Fashioned
Consistent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Inconsistent
Independent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dependent
Rich	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Poor
Generous	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Selfish
Productive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unproductive
Busy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Idle
Secure	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Insecure
Strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Weak
Healthy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unhealthy
Active	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Passive
Handsome	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Ugly
Cooperative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncooperative
Optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Pessimistic
Satisfied	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dissatisfied
Expectant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Resigned
Flexible	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Inflexible
Hopeful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dejected
Organized	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Disorganized
Happy	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Sad
Friendly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unfriendly
Neat	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Untidy
Trustful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Suspicious
Self-Reliant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dependent
Liberal	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Conservative
Certain	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Uncertain
Tolerant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Intolerant
Pleasant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Unpleasant
Ordinary	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Eccentric
Aggressive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Defensive
Exciting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Dull
Decisive	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Indecisive